

**Riverside General Plan Program
Magnolia/Market Corridor Subcommittee**

**Meeting #1
Monday, June 2, 2003
Conference Room, 5th Floor, City Hall
3900 Main Street, Riverside**

On Monday, June 2, 2003, the Riverside General Plan Magnolia/Market Corridor Subcommittee held its first meeting. The meeting was led by City Planning Department staff and The Arroyo Group (members of the CBA consultant team). The following people were in attendance:

Magnolia/Market Corridor Subcommittee Members:

Eric Solander
Mike Conway
Manuel Carrasco
Bill Galloway

City Planning Staff:

Ken Gutierrez
Craig Aaron
Diane Jenkins
Herman Mukasa
Wendell Bugtai

The Arroyo Group:

Larry Morrison
Jean D'Agostino

The focus of the meeting was to discuss the purpose and process of the Magnolia/Market Land Use and Zoning Study and its relationship to the General Plan and Zoning Code Update; review the planning background of the area (*1999 Magnolia/Market Corridor Study*); and discuss land use opportunities in the context of the Districts recommended in that study.

The Arroyo Group presented a PowerPoint presentation that reviewed the vision and land use recommendations for each District, and showed how the Corridor looks today. The PowerPoint presentation also presented the new zoning and streetscape improvements for Market Street which are already being implemented as part of the adopted Downtown Specific Plan.

The discussion of land use opportunities that followed was based around the seven Districts of the *1999 Magnolia/Market Corridor Study*. Comments made by the Magnolia/Market Corridor Subcommittee are provided below:

Corridor-wide Comments

- Get bike lanes off the Corridor – particularly in Arlington and La Sierra.
- Endorse moving bus station off the Corridor to Marketplace.
- Use smaller shuttle buses within the residential areas, linking to the bus system along Market/Magnolia.
- Magnolia/Market Corridor is more than just a traffic mover for cars – cars need to be secondary, not primary.
- RTA is looking at providing Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) along the Corridor.
- In Boulder, CO, students get free bus passes as part of their student fees – Riverside should implement that as well.
- More pedestrian amenities are needed at bus stops.
- Make Brockton an alternative automobile route for people to relieve some of the traffic on Magnolia.
- We need alternative routes for cars if the Corridor becomes something other than auto-focused.
- Like to see Magnolia used for shorter trips and other routes for longer trips.
- Get the traffic flow friendlier so people don't cut through the residential neighborhoods.

Downtown

(Comments for Downtown were limited because the Downtown Specific Plan is already being implemented, which includes new land use and zoning for the area, as well as the majority of recommendations for the Downtown from the 1999 Magnolia/Market Corridor Study.)

- We need better (and more) landscaping along Market Street from the 60 Freeway into Downtown to screen the facilities along this portion of the Corridor (armory, storm channel). This is the Gateway into Downtown and needs to have attractive landscaping.

Wood Streets

- Continue to emphasize and encourage its historic nature.
- There are many infill opportunities. We need appropriate design criteria for infill development to ensure that new development is compatible with the historic character of this District.
- An important characteristic of Wood Streets is the street trees. We need a Tree Retention Program to maintain the “green” character of the area.

Magnolia Center

- Need emphasis on maintenance and on complementary design criteria for this area.
- Brockton Arcade:
 - Needs better maintenance to keep up its appearance.
 - Needs more green (landscaping).
 - Ownership pattern in Brockton Arcade is fragmented – 13 owners – mostly older owners who use this property as their “nest egg.” However, this is starting to change and we're starting to see some new owners.

- Huell Howser did a program on the Brockton Arcade.
- Brockton Avenue:
 - Need to preserve the character of Brockton Avenue from Central Avenue down to Arlington Avenue – especially once Walgreens comes in. This is a quaint street used by the neighborhood and community with restaurants, etc.
 - Maybe use chicanes or some other form of street improvement.
- Riverside Plaza:
 - Riverside Plaza has had a negative impact on Magnolia Center in that it has put many independent storeowners out of business.
 - Riverside Plaza improvements really make it 3 centers in 1: Power Center; Life Style Center with a theater (“fake Main Street” that will connect to Sunnyside Drive); and a Neighborhood Shopping Center with Trader Joe’s, Vons, and Sav-On.
- Sunnyside Drive:
 - There is an urban design opportunity to link Riverside Plaza to the Corridor via Sunnyside Drive. Sunnyside Drive is an entrance to the Plaza.
 - Angled parking was installed to slow traffic and provide more parking.
 - Plans for street trees and grates never came to fruition. Problem: How do you get water to the street trees on these side streets? Property owners couldn’t keep it up.
- The new Walgreens hurts the chance of linking Brockton Arcade to Riverside Plaza, but there is synergy between the two areas and an urban design opportunity to link these two centers. It is very walkable.
- There are many complaints in the Brockton Arcade area that there is no parking.
- Maybe use a Parking District approach to provide more parking and link the two centers.
- Also, maybe run a trolley from one center to the other, with shared parking validation between the two centers.
- Need to fix the “fly trap” intersection (Magnolia, Central, Brockton) if we want to link the two centers.
- Need stronger connection between the Bluecross medical offices and shopping area – use streetscape improvements to link the areas.
- Demolish the underutilized uses around Dairy Queen and put in housing (around School Center Road).
- We need housing on the west side of Magnolia for the retail to be successful. Maybe mixed-use retail/residential in this area. Residences around Brockton are what make the Brockton Arcade successful – they can walk to it.
- However, what is our saturation point with retail? Is Riverside providing too much retail? We need more housing to support the retail.
- We lost a lot of retail in Magnolia Center when the Riverside Plaza was developed.

Magnolia Heritage

- There are a lot of apartments in this District, as well as businesses in old homes.
- There are opportunities to have more office zoning and adaptively reuse older homes which are currently rental properties and not maintained properly. This would improve the appearance of the Corridor.
- If we’re willing to tear down some of the older homes that are in disrepair – let’s do that. If not, we should adaptively reuse them for offices.

- We need to look at densifying the Corridor because that's where transit is and we need a critical mass for transit ridership.
- Need District-specific design criteria in each District before we change zoning so that developers have guidance and regulations for good design.
- There are many opportunities for infill in this District.
- At Monroe Street there is good opportunity for higher density residential.
- Need to determine which of the existing housing stock is historically significant so that "fear factor" is removed for developers who want to redevelop an area with higher density housing or mixed-use projects. The City should provide this information to developers.
- We need to establish policies as part of the General Plan update for higher density housing along the Corridor and moving historic properties when necessary for larger projects.

Arlington

- Move the southeastern boundary from Dawes Street down to Hughes Alley.
- We need to take into account the Arlington Community Plan as part of this study and the General Plan update.
- The Arlington Community is holding the 5th of July Chili Cook Off – closing down part of Magnolia to raise community awareness and interest. This is the first year for this event, which is planned to be held annually.
- Arlington residents consider it "the other downtown."
- This District is in deterioration. It needs "sprucing up."
- It has a unique commercial base with lots of infill opportunities.
- The old Jenkins building is hurting the Van Buren intersection – but it's a historic building.
- Arlington Community Committee based design criteria for the around 1930's – 40's era building design. This should be maintained.
- Van Buren intersection is dangerous and heavily congested. There is poor visibility and traffic impacts.
- The "Village" concept for this intersection (as describe in the *1999 Magnolia/Market Corridor Study*) is in conflict with traffic on Van Buren. Therefore, maybe we should split up land use types between east and west (separated by Van Buren) with housing on one side and commercial on other side.
- Van Buren/Magnolia could be a viable pedestrian commercial intersection if the traffic could be put somewhere else.
- Need to capitalize on the uniqueness of the area.
- Need eminent domain in this area.
- Another land use concept is to move and expand the Arlington Library (plans to move because current site is too small) to the Mobil Station site and link it to Arlington Park by vacating Miller Street.
- Add a community center and expand the park.
- Another land use concept is to expand the Galleria (commercial uses) down Magnolia, then get rid of the houses and/or put in mixed-use projects on south side of Magnolia, west of Van Buren.
- If impediments for development are taken away, housing and more commercial in this District becomes viable.
- Another land use concept is to redevelop the area all the way down to Diana Avenue.

- East of Van Buren, for the first block, should be pedestrian-oriented shopping.
- Further east of Van Buren should potentially become residential, potentially become neighborhood commercial, or remain as it is right now, which is highway commercial-type uses.
- There is concern with too much residential in this District because the energy needs to be put in one area or another (east or west of Van Buren). We should focus on west of Van Buren first because there is more opportunity for higher density projects because of deeper lots, etc.
- We need to keep going with streetscape improvements planned for the area.
- Any emphasis on historical buildings in this District should be on the type or design of new or improved buildings for compatibility. We should not necessarily be married to preserving every historic building.

Galleria

- The Galleria is expanding to include a Life Style Entertainment Center.
- There is expansion potential north of Magnolia along Tyler Street (in the “Golden Triangle”). There is an older strip center that should be redeveloped.
- The Galleria District is a tax generator for city. There should be no residential uses here.
- There need to be significant work on the north/east corner of this District.
- The block west of Tyler Street also needs help.
- Riverside needs to attract quality retail – this is the place to do it.

La Sierra

- There are some good restaurants in this District, but lots of underutilized uses with huge, empty parking lots.
- The City is proposing a police station at the southeast corner of La Sierra Avenue (using an existing building). This is not the best use of this site. This would be a great site for mixed-use development (residential, retail, restaurant, office). It could tie into existing restaurants and have a pedestrian overpass to the Metrolink Station.
- There are many Orange County commuters who live in La Sierra, therefore there is a good opportunity for higher end residential in this District.
- The RCC site and the north side of Indiana are opportunities for high quality mixed-use and residential development.
- There are opportunities for light industrial development around Park Sierra Drive. Also light industrial opportunities on the large vacant sites in the southeast portion of the District, near the City limits. We need more employment generating land in the City.
- There is market demand for light industrial uses.
- Another option is for business park uses from Park Sierra down to City limits.
- The “Fillmore Triangle” provides an opportunity for: 1) business park, 2) freeway oriented retail (but is there too much retail out here?), or 3) apartments. Business Park would be the best option.

Next Meeting

The Magnolia/Market Corridor Subcommittee agreed to hold the next meeting (August 18, 2003) at City Hall.